



Transforming the Governor's Landscape

Green Industry Develops Relationship with Michigan's Governor & First Family

by Amy Frankmann

How It Started

In a meeting last November I had the pleasure of hearing and speaking with the First Gentleman of Michigan, Daniel Granholm Mulhern. He was speaking about the interior remodeling taking place at the Governor's Residence in Lansing. As it turned out, the remodeling project pretty much involved the entire house. As I sat there listening and looking at the photos he'd brought, I couldn't help but wonder how their landscape was faring. After the meeting, I approached the First Gentleman, introduced myself, told him that I represent Michigan's nursery and landscape industry and asked him how his yard was. He gave a little chuckle, put his head in his hand and told me that it was a mess. I then asked if he and the Governor would be interested in working with the industry to improve it. He indicated they'd be very interested and gave me a contact name.

I followed up with his contact and the First Gentlemen attended our December Board of Directors meeting to discuss with MNLA's Board the possibility of re-landscaping the Governor's Residence. What we thought was just going to be bringing in plant material and labor to install it turned into a full project, from design to installation.

Where It Went

The MNLA Board of Directors embraced the opportunity to raise awareness of the Green Industry and told the First Gentlemen that we'd take care of the landscape. A design team was formed and all seven of our Regional Chapter organizations and Dr. Bob Schutzki, leading a team from Michigan State University, came on board. Since December many hours have been donated to completing the design, removals, and preparation of areas for the re-landscape. In addition, we've been able to bring in the expertise and involvement of our Green Industry partners the MI Christmas Tree Association, the MI Irrigation Association, and the MI Sod Grower's Association.

The many hours of preparations led to our first coordinated workday at the Governor's Residence on June 16, 2004. Seventeen firms came through with plant material and equipment and 45 of our current and future industry leaders gathered to complete four sections of the job. Every one of our seven Regional Chapters were represented and worked side-by-side with students from Michigan State University's Department of Horticulture. The transformation that took place was unbelievable, even to some of our veterans. It really didn't hit us until Governor Granholm and the First Gentleman arrived home for the day. Their enthusiastic reaction compounded with their gratitude to our industry was promotion that you just can't buy. We came together and developed one of the most valuable relationships this industry has ever known.

Where It's At

We're now moving on to Phase Two and the completion of the project. Our goal is to be finished by mid-August. There's plenty yet to do, so if you're interested in getting involved please contact me at the MNLA office. Members of the industry are assisting with gathering the plant materials and supplies still needed. If you receive a call, I encourage you to make a donation to this project. It'll be one of the best investments your firm will ever make.

Contributors

These are the dedicated firms and individuals that have donated plant material, supplies, equipment and/or labor to-date:

Michigan Nursery and Landscape Association Staff:

Rebecca Barney	Julie Chrisinske
LeAnn Dethlefsen	Debra Holds
Tim Malatinsky	LaVone Swanson

MNLA/MSU Nursery and Landscape Integrator:

Diane Brown-Rytlewski



Governor Jennifer Granholm and First Gentleman Daniel Mulhern with part of the transformation team at the end of the work day.

Southeast Michigan Nursery and Landscape Association

Christensen's Plant Center – Eric Joy
 Conroy & Associates – Pat Conroy
 English Gardens – Mike Bovio, Michael Southgate, Susana Ditter, John Collins
 Global Garden, Inc. – Marie Muehlenbein
 Jasso Tree Service, Inc. – Mike Jasso
 Lodi Farms, Ltd. – Daniel Riddle
 Midwest Groundcovers – Judy Wehrmeister
 Northfield Farms – Laurel Camen, Mary Holley, Philip Brown
 Vandenberg Bulb Company, Inc. – Tim Vandenberg
 Wiegand's Nursery, Inc. – Wendy Wiegand, Mathew Paul Ross, James Moylan, Crystal Williams
 Zarembo & Company, Inc. – Pat Zarembo

West Michigan Nursery and Landscape Association

Evergreen Acres – Gary Katerberg, Natalie Katerberg
 Rosebay Nursery – Linda Charvat
 West Michigan Tree Services – Vic Foerster
 Zelenka Nursery, Inc. – Matt Nease, Joe Eveland

Saginaw Valley Association of Nurserymen

Kluck Nursery, Inc. – Tom Kluck

Association of Grand Rapids Landscape Professionals

Boverhof Landscape Service, Inc. – Deb Boverhof, Gary Boverhof, Joel Boverhof

Lincoln Nurseries, Inc. – Eric Nelson

Kalamazoo Valley Landscape and Nursery Association

DeVisser Landscape Service, Inc. – Dave DeVisser
 Renewed Earth Inc. – Jim Glas, Jody Carlson

Genesee Area Landscape and Nursery Association

Owen Tree Service, Inc. – Kay Sicheneder
 Stonebridge Landscape Service, LLC – Michael Smith
 Trim Pines Farm, Inc. – Mike Yancho, Anthony Walker

Capital Area Landscape Nurserymen's Association

Bobcat of Lansing – Todd Wilcox
 JSO Services – Justin Otten
 Outdoor Living, Inc. – Mike Holmes
 Jim Plesscher
 Plum Line Landscape & Design – Peter Motz, Michael Keener
 Smith Tree & Landscape Service, Inc. – Dustin Phillips, Chris Veeley
 The Village Gardener – Bill Wilber

Michigan State University

Liz Dafoe
 Jack Fitzsimmons
 Jeff Huyser
 Dr. Robert Schutzki

Andrew Ferrara
 Steve Frank
 Justin Reed





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